## Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method comprising ~~the steps of~~

(a)     storing in at least one data store in operative connection with at least one computer, data representative of each of

at least one patient,

medical history of the at least one patient,

at least one medical item prescribed for use by the at least one patient, and

at least one medical item stored in a patient-accessible self service medical item dispenser apparatus, wherein the dispenser apparatus is operative to receive at least one input from the at least one patient;

(b)     receiving at least one input through at least one input device of the dispenser apparatus, wherein the at least one input device is in operative connection with the at least one computer, wherein the at least one input includes a request to dispense to a first patient at least one medical item prescribed for use by the first patient;

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(c)     checking medical history data of the first patient to determine if the at least one medical item requested in step (b) should be withheld from being dispensed to the first patient;

(d)     instructing the dispenser apparatus to dispense the at least one medical item requested in step (b), responsive to a determination made in step (c) that the at least one medical item requested in step (b) should not be withheld from being dispensed to the first patient; and

(e)     including in the at least one data store, data linking a dispense of the at least one medical item requested in step (b) to the first patient

(a)     ~~storing in at least one data store in operative connection with at least one computer, data representative of at least one patient and at least one medical item prescribed for use by the patient;~~

(b)     ~~storing in the data store, data representative of a plurality of holding locations for medical items in a medical item dispenser, a plurality of types of medical items; and for each of the storage locations, a type medical item stored in the respective storage location;~~

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(c)     ~~inputting through an input device in operative connection with the computer and~~
        ~~the dispenser, data corresponding to the patient;~~

(d)     ~~dispensing from the dispenser responsive to the data stored in the data store, the~~
        ~~type medical item prescribed for use by the patient, wherein the type medical~~
        ~~item is dispensed from a storage location holding the type medical item in the~~
        ~~dispenser;~~

(e)     ~~including in the data store responsive to execution of step (d), data representative~~
        ~~that the type medical item has been dispensed for use by the patient, and that the~~
        ~~type medical item has been dispensed from the dispenser.~~

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 and further comprising the steps of:

    storing in the at least one data store, data representative of a benefit plan

    associated with the first patient, and payment rules concerning payment for

    medical items associated with the benefit plan;

    and further comprising the step of charging for the dispensed medical item in

    accordance with the payment rules.

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3. (original) The method according to claim 2 and further comprising the step of:

      reading a credit or debit card with a card reading device adjacent the dispenser,

wherein the card reading device is in operative connection with the computer, and

wherein the charging step includes charging an account associated with the credit

or debit card.

4. (original) The method according to claim 2 wherein data representative of a benefits provider

is stored in correlated relation with data representative of a benefit plan, and wherein the

charging step includes charging the benefits provider.

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 3 wherein data representative of a benefits

provider is stored in correlated relation with the data representative of the benefit plan, and

wherein the rules concerning payment associated with the first patient include a co-pay

requirement associated with the use of the medical item, and further comprising the step of

calculating a co-payment amount associated with the medical item, and wherein in the charging

step the account is charged the co-pay amount.

6. (original) The method according to claim 5 and further comprising the step of calculating a

benefit amount associated with the medical item, and wherein the charging step comprises

charging the benefits provider the benefit amount.

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7. (original) The method according to claim 5 and prior to the charging step, further comprising

the step of outputting through an output device adjacent to the dispenser, indicia representative of

the co-pay amount.

8. (original) The method according to claim 7 and prior to the charging step, further comprising

the step of receiving through an input device adjacent the dispenser, an input indicative of

acceptance of the co-pay amount.

9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 <u>wherein step (b) includes receiving at</u>

<u>least one input of data corresponding to the first patient,</u> and further comprising the steps of:

storing in the <u>at least one</u> data store, data representative of a plurality of benefit

plans, and for each benefit plan, corresponding payment rules concerning payment

for medical items;

storing in the <u>at least one</u> data store, data representative of a benefit plan

associated with the <u>first</u> patient;

responsive to ~~input of~~ <u>receiving</u> data corresponding to the <u>first</u> patient ~~in step (c)~~,

determining responsive to operation of the computer a benefit plan associated

with the <u>first</u> patient; and

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charging for the medical item in accordance with the payment rules associated with the benefit plan determined to be associated with the first patient.

10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 and prior to step (d) further comprising the step of displaying on an output device adjacent to the dispenser, display indicia including indicia indicative of the at least one medical item requested in step (b) type medical item.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 10 and prior to step (d) further comprising the step of receiving an at least one input through an the at least one input device indicating agreement with the display indicia.

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 11 and prior to step (a), inputting through a physician terminal in operative connection with the at least one computer, prescription data representative of information that the at least one medical item has been prescribed for the first patient, and a medical condition for which the at least one medical item has been prescribed, wherein in step (a) the data stored includes prescription data, and wherein in the displaying step the display indicia includes indicia indicative of the medical condition.

13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 11 and prior to step (a) inputting through a physician terminal in operative connection with the at least one computer, prescription data representative of information that the at least one medical item has been prescribed for the first patient and a physician name corresponding to a physician prescribing the at least one medical

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item for the first patient, and wherein in step (a) the data stored includes prescription data, and wherein in the displaying step the display indicia includes indicia indicative of the physician name.

14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 13 and further comprising the step of applying in connection with the ~~dispensed type~~ at least one medical item, indicia indicative of the physician name.

15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 14 wherein the prescription data includes data indicative of an instruction for using the ~~type~~ at least one medical item, and wherein in the applying step, indicia indicative of the instruction for using the ~~type~~ at least one medical item is applied in connection with the ~~type~~ at least one medical item ~~dispensed in step (d)~~.

16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 and prior to step (a), inputting through a physician terminal in operative connection with the at least one computer, prescription data representative that the at least one medical item has been prescribed for the first patient, wherein in step (a) the data stored includes prescription data.

17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 16 and further comprising the step of applying to the ~~type~~ at least one medical item, indicia indicative of data included in the prescription data.

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18. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17 wherein the prescription data includes an instruction for using the ~~type~~ at least one medical item, and wherein in the applying step the indicia applied to the at least one medical item includes indicia indicative of the instruction.

19. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17 and further comprising prior to the applying step, printing a prescription label, wherein the prescription label includes the indicia indicative of the ~~data~~ instruction included in the prescription data, wherein in the applying step the label is applied in connection with the ~~type~~ at least one medical item.

20. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17 wherein the applying step is executed prior to step (d) ~~, wherein the indicia indicative of data included in prescription data is applied to the type medical item to be dispensed in step (d)~~.

21. (original) The method according to claim 19 wherein the applying step is executed subsequent to step (d).

22. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21 and further comprising sensing ~~the~~ a taking of the label after ~~execution of step (d) wherein~~ the medical item is dispensed, and preventing further dispensing by the dispenser until the label is sensed as taken.

23. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein step (a) includes storing in the at least one data store, data representative of a plurality of patients, and for each ~~of the patients~~

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respective patient at least one type medical item prescribed for use by the patient , ~~repeatedly executing steps (a) through (c) where in data corresponding to different ones of the plurality of patients is input in subsequent executions of step (c), and wherein in each step (d) the type medical item dispensed corresponds to the medical item prescribed for the one respective patient corresponding to the data input in the step (c) immediately executed prior to the execution of each step (d)~~.

24. (currently amended) The method according to claim 23 and further comprising after executing ~~a particular step (c)~~ steps (b)-(d) for a second patient, responsive to failing to ~~execute~~ dispense at least one medical item responsive to step (d) and further comprising ~~the~~ a step of contacting the second patient corresponding to ~~the~~ second patient data input in step (b) ~~the particular step (c)~~.

25. (currently amended) The method according to claim 23 wherein the data in the at least one data store includes data representative of a physician corresponding to at least one particular medical item prescribed for ~~at least one~~ a second patient, and wherein responsive to executing steps (b)-(d) for the second patient but failing to dispense at least one medical item responsive to step (d), ~~in a particular step (c) the data corresponding to the particular~~ first patient is input; and ~~thereafter step (d) is not executed, whereby the particular medical item is not dispensed,~~ and further comprising ~~the~~ a step of contacting the physician ~~responsive to failing to carry out step (d)~~.

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26. (currently amended) A method comprising:

    (a)    storing in at least one data store in operative connection with at least one

           computer, data representative of at least one patient and at least one type medical

           item prescribed for use by the at least one patient;

    (b)    storing in the at least one data store, data representative of a plurality of holding

           storage locations for medical items in a medical item dispenser, a plurality of

           types of medical items, and for each of the storage locations, a type medical item

           stored in the respective storage location;

    (c)    inputting through an at least one input device in operative connection with the at

           least one computer and the dispenser, data corresponding to a patient;

    (d)    checking data in the at least one data store representative of a medical history of

           the patient corresponding to the data input in step (c), and determining based on

           the medical history data if a type medical item prescribed for use by the patient

           should be withheld from the patient;

    (e)    responsive to a determination made in step (d) that the type medical item should

           not be withheld from the patient, causing the dispenser to dispense the type

           medical item from a storage location in the dispenser; and

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(f)          including in the <u>at least one</u> data store responsive to execution of step (e), data

representative that the type medical item has been dispensed for use by the patient,

and that the type medical item has been dispensed from the dispenser.


27. (original) The method according to claim 26 wherein the checking step includes

communicating over a public data network.


28. (currently amended) The method according to claim <u>26</u> ~~1~~ wherein the dispenser comprises a

patient-accessible self-service medical item dispenser.


29. (currently amended) The method according to claim <u>26</u> ~~2 and further comprising~~


~~(f)          prior to (d)~~, <u>wherein step (c) includes</u> receiving input from a <u>the</u> patient ~~through at~~

~~least one input device in operative connection with the computer and the~~

~~dispenser.~~


30. (currently amended) The method according to claim 29 wherein ~~(f)~~ <u>step (c)</u> includes receiving

dispense request input from the patient corresponding to at least one medical item prescribed for

use by the patient.


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31. (currently amended) The method according to claim 30 wherein <u>step (c)</u> further includes receiving a payment from the patient corresponding to the at least one medical item requested in the dispense request input.

32. (previously presented) The method according to claim 31 wherein the at least one input device includes a card reader device, wherein the card reader device is in operative connection with the computer, and further comprising

      (g)     reading a credit or debit card with the card reader device, and charging an account associated with the credit or debit card.

33. (currently amended) The method according to claim 31 wherein the payment comprises a co-payment, wherein ~~(f)~~ <u>step (c)</u> includes receiving the co-payment from the patient corresponding to the at least one medical item requested in the dispense request input.

34. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ <u>The method according to claim 1 and further</u> comprising

      <u>(f)</u>     <u>verifying with the dispenser apparatus that the at least one medical item requested in step (b) was dispensed;</u>

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wherein step (e) includes stor ng in the at least one data store data linking the at least one medical item requested in step (b) to the first patient, responsive to the verification in step (f)

(a)     storing in at least one data store in operative connection with at least one computer, data representative of each of

        at least one patient,

        at least one medical item prescribed for use by the at least one patient; and

        at least one medical item stored in a patient-accessible self-service medical item dispenser apparatus, wherein the dispenser apparatus is operative to receive at least one input from the at least one patient;

(b)     receiving at least one input through at least one input device of the dispenser apparatus, wherein the at least one input includes a request to dispense to a first patient at least one medical item prescribed for use by the first patient;

(c)     responsive to the request to dispense, instructing the dispenser apparatus to dispense the requested at least one medical item to the first patient;

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(d)    ~~verifying with the dispenser apparatus that the requested at least one medical item was dispensed;~~

(e)    ~~responsive to the verification, including in the data store, data linking the verified dispensed at least one medical item to the first patient.~~

35. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 ~~34~~ wherein (e) further includes

~~responsive to the verification,~~ including in the <u>at least one</u> data store, data linking

each of

the first patient,

the ~~dispensed~~ at least one medical item <u>as dispensed</u>, and

location of dispensing the at least one medical item.

36. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 ~~34~~ and further comprising

(f)    receiving another at least one input through the at least one input device of the

dispenser apparatus, wherein the another at least one input includes a request to

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dispense to a second patient at least one medical item prescribed for use by the second patient;

(g)    responsive to <u>step (f)</u> ~~the request to dispense to the second patient~~, instructing the dispenser apparatus to dispense ~~the requested at least one medical item~~ to the second patient <u>the at least one medical item requested in step (f)</u>.


37. (currently amended) The method according to claim <u>36</u> ~~34~~ wherein the dispenser apparatus includes at least a first dispenser and a second dispenser, wherein <u>step</u> (b) includes receiving dispense request input from the first patient through an input device in operative connection with the first dispenser, and ~~further comprising~~

     ~~(f)~~    <u>wherein step (f) includes</u> receiving dispense request input from the second patient through an input device in operative connection with the second dispenser;

     ~~(g)~~    ~~responsive to (f),~~ <u>wherein step (g) includes</u> instructing the second dispenser to dispense to the second patient at least one medical item prescribed for use by the second patient<u>.</u> ~~;~~


38. (currently amended) The method according to claim <u>1</u> ~~34~~ and further comprising

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(f)      prior to _step (d)_ (c), receiving with the dispenser apparatus a patient payment

input.

39. (previously presented) The method according to claim 38 and further comprising receiving a

patient payment corresponding to the at least one medical item requested in the dispense request

input.

40. (previously presented) The method according to claim 39 wherein the patient payment

comprises a patient co-payment, and further comprising receiving the patient co-payment

corresponding to the at least one medical item requested in the dispense request input.

41. (previously presented) The method according to claim 38 wherein the dispenser apparatus

includes a card reader device, wherein the card reader device is in operative connection with the

computer, and further comprising

(g)      reading a credit or debit card with the card reader device, and further comprising

charging an account associated with the credit or debit card.

42. (currently amended) The method according to claim 38 wherein the dispenser apparatus

includes a display screen, and further comprising

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(g)     prior to <u>step (f)</u> (c), displaying a payment amount to the patient with the display

        screen.

43. (currently amended) The method according to claim <u>1</u> 34 and further comprising

(f)     prior to <u>step (d)</u> (c), determining whether the at least one medical item

        corresponding to the dispense request input is available for dispensing from the

        dispenser apparatus.

44. (currently amended) The method according to claim 34 wherein <u>step (f) includes</u> (d) further

comprises at least one sensor in the dispenser apparatus transmitting at least one signal

responsive to the at least one sensor <u>in the dispenser apparatus</u> sensing a passing of the requested

at least one medical item, and <u>wherein step</u> (e) <u>includes storing</u> further comprises including in the

<u>at least one</u> data store verification of the dispensing of the <u>requested</u> at least one medical item.

45. (currently amended) A method comprising

(a)     storing in at least one data store in operative connection with at least one

        computer, data representative of each of

                a plurality of medical item storage locations in a patient-accessible self

                service medical item dispenser apparatus,

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a plurality of types of medical items,

the type of medical item stored in each respective storage location,

at least one patient, and

at least one medical item type prescribed for use by the at least one patient;

(b)      receiving patient identification data from a patient through at least one input

device of the dispenser apparatus;

(c)      receiving from the patient through the at least one input device a request to

dispense at least one medical item type prescribed for use by the patient;

(d)      determining based on medical history data corresponding to the patient, whether

the requested at least one medical item type should be withheld from the patient;

(e) (d) reading a credit or debit card with a card reader device of the dispenser apparatus;

(f) (e) charging an amount to an account associated with the credit or debit card, wherein

the amount corresponds to a payment associated with the requested at least one

medical item type;

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(g) (f)  responsive to at least a determination made in step (d) that the at least one medical

item type should not be withheld from the patient, instructing the dispenser

apparatus to dispense to the patient the requested at least one medical item type;

(g)  ~~dispensing from the dispenser apparatus to the patient the requested at least one~~

~~medical item type, wherein the at least one medical item type is dispensed from at~~

~~least one storage location holding the at least one medical item type;~~

(h)  ~~verifying with the dispenser apparatus that the requested at least one medical item~~

~~type was dispensed to the patient, including at least one sensor in the dispenser~~

~~apparatus transmitting at least one signal to the computer responsive to the at least~~

~~one sensor sensing a passing of the requested at least one medical item type;~~

(h) (i)  including in the at least one data store ~~responsive to (h)~~, data linking each of

the patient,

the ~~verified dispensed~~ requested at least one medical item type, and

a dispensing location of the ~~dispensing of the verified dispensed~~ requested

at least one medical item type.

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